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ABSTRACT

The Knoxville City Schools (KCS) Proficiency Project ran from fall 1984 to spring 1987 in three Knoxville, Tennessee, middle schools and three high schools. Students in three of the eight KCS high schools were scoring consistently lower than pupils in the other schools on the grade 9 State Proficiency Test, especially in math (M) and language arts (LA). The primary intervention was a group of three proficiency teachers; each worked with one middle school (especially grade 8) and one high school (especially grade 9) to help teachers prepare grade 9 pupils in the three target schools to pass the M and LA portions of the test. This paper compares annual test results in the following groups of schools: (1) Proficiency Project, or target; (2) other schools; and (3) city, i.e., total. In 1982 there were great differences among the three groups of schools. After one year of the project in 1985, differences among the schools were small; the 1986 differences were a little greater than in 1985, but in 1987 the differences became comparatively less. The city scores for 1987 are greater than the 1982-84 average. The following explanations may account for this increase: (1) the target schools' scores pushed up the city scores; (2) the other schools' scores pulled up the city scores; or (3) a combination of the above. Data are presented on seven tables and several figures. A list of references is included as well as a list of prior reports of this project. Appendices include t-test analyses comparing pretest and posttest scores of selected groupings of respondents, and present the results of a questionnaire of math and language arts teachers' needs and concerns. (BJV)

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EVALUATION OF THREE YEARS OF A BASIC SKILLS REMEDIATION PROJECT IN TENNESSEE

The Knoxville City Schools (KCS)
Proficiency Test Project:
Summary of Three Years and Year-Three Results

An Evaluation of a Project to Help Pupils
Improve on a State Basic Skills Test

Evaluation Work Conducted Through:

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Annual Meeting, Mobile, AL November 12, 1987

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EVALUATION OF THREE YEARS OF A BASIC SKILLS REMEDIATION PROJECT IN TENNESSEE*

INTRODUCTION

The Proficiency Test Project completed its third and final year in three Knoxville high schools (Austin East, Fulton, and Rule) and three middle schools (Beardsley, Christenberry, and Vine) in Spring, 1987. Measures of project results included analyses of grade-nine student results on the Math (M) and Language Arts (LA) portions of the State Proficiency Test, teacher questionnaire data, observations in schools, and detailed analyses of test results by groups of pupils.

Context: The Setting and The History

The Knoxville City Schools (KCS) Proficiency Project began activity in Fall, 1984. Pupils in three of the KCS eight high schools were scoring consistently lower than pupils in the other schools on the grade-nine State Proficiency Test, especially in Math (M) and Language Arts (LA). A committee developed the proficiency project and the Tennessee State Department of Education funded the three-year project. The primary intervention was a group of three proficiency teachers; each worked with one middle schools (especially grade 8) and one high school (especially grade 9) to help teachers prepare grade-nine pupils in the three Target (X) schools to pass the M and LA portions of the proficiency test.

Besides the collection and analyses of group data (gross data by school, groups of schools, etc.), the study also used some analyses of randomly selected pupils from the (X) and three similar "control" or "comparison"

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schools (O) to help personnel better understand the impact of the proficiency project. The project's purpose reflects key project concerns:

Purpose. To increase the percent of grade-nine pupils passing the proficiency test in the three Target schools (X) and to reduce the disparities between the percent passing in (X) and in: the City, in Other (n=5) City high schools, and in three designated "control" (O) schools through implementation of a "Proficiency Project" emphasizing basic skills achievement.

The primary criterion for project success was the percent of grade-nine students passing the (M) and (LA) portions of the proficiency test administered each spring. Grade-nine students obtained some test practice from a pre-proficiency test in the fall of each project year.

The KCS contracted with the Bureau of Educational Research and Service (BERS), College of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville to conduct impartial project evaluations. Annual evaluation reports (see Bibliography/References section) provide information on the project's design and content, as well as details of treatment implementation and the first two years of project results.

General Limitations

This study has several important limitations. The evaluators assessed results of grade-nine pupils, and each year dealt with different pupils. The project serves essentially all grade-nine pupils in the three Target (X) high schools. It was impossible to have a true control group. The evaluators avoided "extra" tests since the school year is already busy with testing. Results were derived from normal KCS tests except teacher perceptions of the project which were obtained from a brief questionnaire.*

*This decision caused a minor problem. State and KCS reporting formats were changed in 1987, and this influenced (about 2 percent) some results. In 1987 results of handicapped pupils were included in the school and total data; in 1982-86 these results were removed. Evaluators removed results of handicapped pupils (HR) in detailed analyses (samples), but used the state-provided data for other comparisons.

Evaluation Design Considerations

Although there are "ideal" and rigorous designs for research and evaluation efforts, schooling takes place in "the real world." Researchers, while striving for the ideal, must accommodate policy, politics and projects designed by non-researchers. This evaluation is primarily a field study, conducted on site and employing selected quasi-experimental procedures. During the project's first year, the three (X) high schools were "matched" with the three (of five) other KCS high schools which most closely resembled the three (X) schools. Two KCS high schools were excluded from this matching because their percent of grade-nine pupils passing the test has consistently exceeded by far the percent passing at the other schools.

In the project's first year (1984-85), evaluators chose a pretest/posttest design. Researchers obtained random samples from the "experimental" (X) and "control" (O) ninth grades as follows. After the pre-proficiency test results were available, a random sample meeting the .95 confidence interval was drawn from all grade-nine pupils in project schools. That sample was divided by socio-economic status (Lo/Hi) into youngsters receiving free or reduced lunch (FL), and those receiving no free lunch (NFL). Researchers then drew a proportionate random sample (based on FL) from all grade-nine pupils in the "control" schools. After the spring (1985) test, all sampled youngsters from the (X) and (O) groups with four data points (pre M and LA, post M and LA) were included in the analyses.

There were large, significant pretest differences favoring the (O) groupings. There were large first-year gains in the (X) schools. At the posttest, differences in mean scores of (X) and (O) groups were not significant. Since the project showed the desired pre-to-post outcome, years two and three used a post-test only design. (See Appendix A). In the second year, evaluators reviewed project records to assure continued implementation

of project elements. Evaluators only compared total school test results between the three Target (X) schools and five other city schools, and the three (X) schools and the city average. Evaluators analyzed teacher perceptions of the project.

The third-year evaluation incorporates design decisions from prior years. There were checks of implementation processes. Teacher perceptions were analyzed using questionnaire data. Analyses of pupil results follow a post-test only design. There are both 1) the gross analyses of overall percent passing in the (X) schools compared to (O) and City, and 2) use of a random sample drawn from (X) and from (O) schools for analyses following the effective schools maxim that when disaggregated, there should not be significant differences between/among mean scores of various demographic groups.

The KCS Proficiency Project and Effective Schools Ideas

The KCS Proficiency Project fits some aspects of the "effective schools" emphasis presently in vogue (Edmonds, 1979; Brookover, et al., 1982; See Bibliography/References Section). The project attends to student basic skills in Math (M) and Language Arts (LA). Measurement is limited primarily to pupil performance on the state-developed, criterion-referenced proficiency test wherein a youngster passes a specific skill if he/she correctly answers three of the four questions relating to that skill.

Project personnel enlisted help of parents and community groups (business, volunteers, adopt-a-schools, etc.) and conveyed "effective schools" concepts to teachers through inservice programming. Unlike a full effective schools implementation, this project paid little direct attention to developing leadership skills of principals, improving teacher expectations, or school climate. The project differs from many effective schools efforts by its focus on middle (grade 8) and high (grade 9) schools rather than elementary school.

RESULTS: TEST SCORES

Summary Results, 1987

Annual project results (1985, 1986, and 1987) are compared to historical results on the proficiency test (from 1982) and to the historical average (1982-84) by individual schools and by groups of schools to show trends. On the positive side, the city ($\bar{x}$ of 8 H.S.), Target (n=3), and the Other (n=5) schools are all showing growth when compared to the baseline data.

The 1987 Target Schools' (X) gains were striking when compared to baseline (1982-84 average) and to city-wide gains. Table 1 provides the basic data for the comparisons. Figure 1 graphically shows the trends for Math (M) and Language Arts (LA) for City, Proficiency Project or Target (n=3) and Other (n=5) high schools. In 1982 there were great differences among the three groups of schools. Alfter one year of the project in 1985, differences among the average scores of the Target schools, Other schools and City were small; the 1986 differences were a little greater than 1985, but in 1987 the differences became comparatively less. Note that results for handicapped youth were removed from Target (n=3) and Other (n=5) but not for City results. An estimate for comparabilty would increase City results about 2 percent (based on historical trends) if results of handicapped pupils were removed (HR). Handicapped pupils' scores were removed from the experimental (X) and control (O) samples in the detailed internal analyses. Table 2 summarizes differences between Target (n=3), City and Other (n=5) schools' percentages of students passing the Proficiency Test (M and LA) for 1982, 1985, 1986, and 1987.

Table 1
Annual Percentage Passing Proficiency Test by School (1982-1987)
and Average Percentage by Target and Other Schools,
Knoxville, 1982-1987

	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987		1987 HR		Mean 82-84	
	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L
Target																
A. East	46.4	33.1	59.8	40.6	76.2	54.8	85.6	69.3	86.0	72.0	81.3	69.0	93.1	81.6	60.8	42.8
Fulton	91.0	60.7	88.2	71.3	87.7	73.8	91.0	82.2	94.0	77.7	91.3	78.3	96.9	83.7	88.9	68.6
Rule	74.1	52.3	72.5	53.6	64.1	53.5	87.8	64.7	79.3	59.7	82.7	72.8	83.5	74.7	70.2	53.1
X (3 H.S.)	74.7	51.1	76.6	58.6	77.5	62.9	88.5	73.6	87.6	71.0	85.5	73.4	92.7	81.1	76.2	57.4
Others																
Bearden	92.6	90.4	92.3	86.5	94.1	92.2	94.5	92.3	96.0	91.9	97.1	92.2	98.4	94.2	93.0	89.7
Central	84.1	79.6	93.6	85.4	90.9	83.2	90.3	82.0	95.6	86.8	96.2	89.9	96.4	90.3	92.9	82.7
Holston	95.1	61.7	93.5	74.8	97.6	80.6	97.7	87.6	100.0	94.6	97.0	92.1	99.9	92.7	95.5	72.4
S. Young	74.8	62.2	78.5	62.7	77.9	67.0	80.8	68.7	95.9	84.2	83.6	67.4	91.2	75.5	77.1	64.0
West	82.0	70.1	83.5	80.1	82.1	78.0	90.3	80.1	89.9	86.0	81.2	73.6	83.9	78.3	82.5	76.1
X (5 H.S.)	86.8	74.1	86.7	77.8	86.7	79.5	91.0	83.5	95.3	88.8	92.1	84.5	94.4	87.8	88.6	79.9
City																
X (8 H.S.)	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	90.3	80.7	92.9	83.3	90.2	81.4	94.6	85.8	84.8	72.3
City X*	83.0	66.9	83.7	72.1	84.1	74.8	88.3	78.8	91.1	81.7	88.4	79.6	N/C	N/C	83.6	71.2

* City average included more pupils that the sum of these eight schools. All percentages rounded.

M = Math; L = Language Arts. N/C = not computed. HR = handicapped removed.

Table 2

Summary: Differences in Percent Passing M & LA Proficiency Test 1982, 1985, 1986, and 1987 by Project Schools (n=3), Other schools (n=5) and City (3+5=8).

	Project Schools (n=3) and City (n=8)		Project Schools and Other (n=5)	
Year	M	LA	M	LA
1982	8.3	15.8	12.1	23.0
1985	.2	5.2	5.2	9.9
1986	3.5	10.7	7.7	17.8
1987	2.9	6.2	6.6	11.1

Figure 1 (based on Table 1 data) illustrates the percent passing from 1982 to 1987 for pupils in the Target, Other, and City schools. While the 1982 percent passing for the Other schools is greater than for Target schools for both M and LA, the 1987 percents are becoming closer. When the baseline (average of 1982-83-84) and the 1987 percent of pupils passing M are compared, Other schools increased from 88.6% to 94.4% while Target schools increased from 76.2% to 92.7%. The percent difference for Target schools and Other schools for M decreased from 12.4% to 1.7%. The Target schools' LA percent passing increased from 57.4% to 81.1% while the Other schools' percent increased from 78.9% to 87.6%. The difference between the percent passing LA in Target and Other schools decreased from 21.5 to 6.5% from 1982 to 1987.

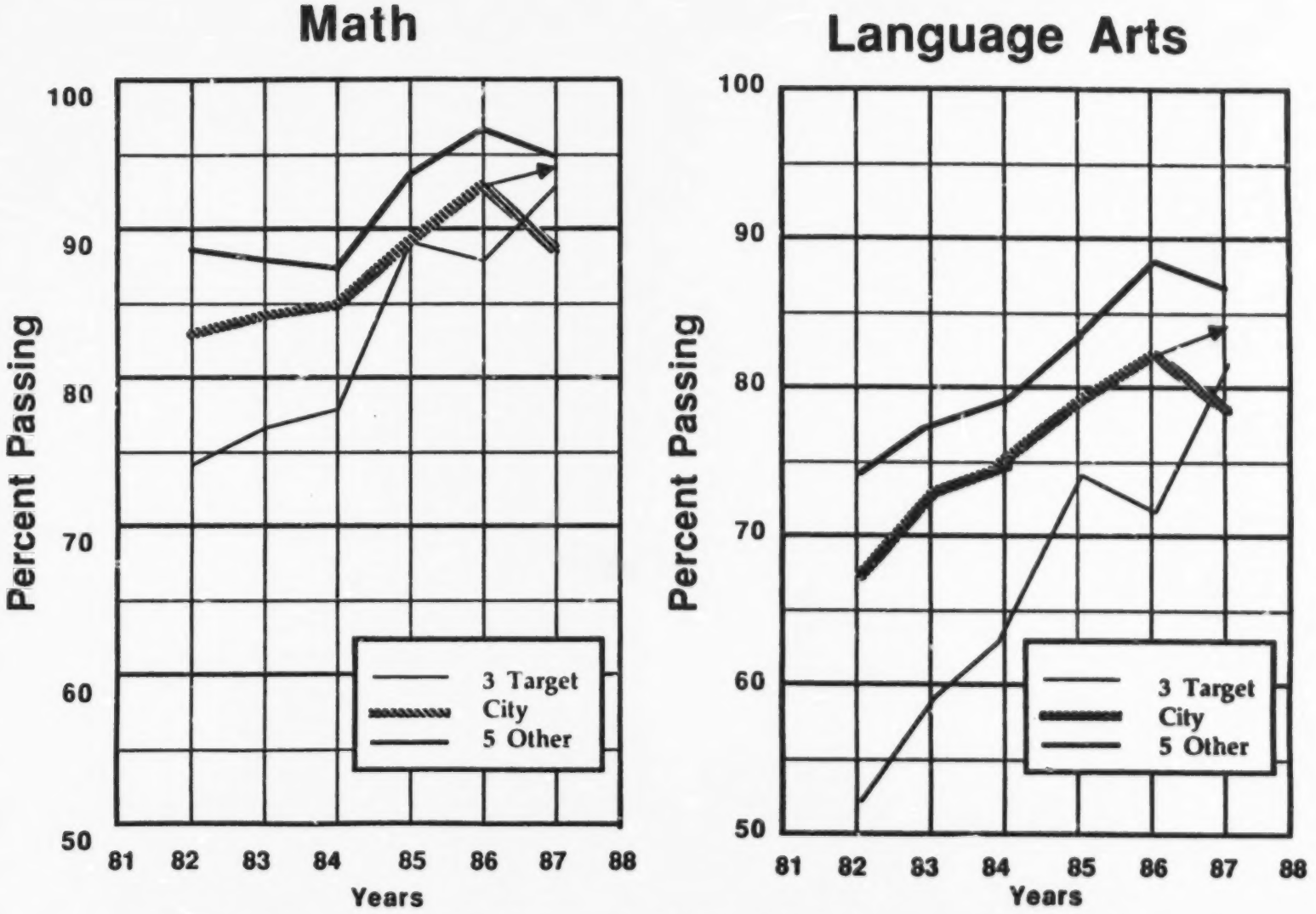

Figure 1. Percent passing Math (M) and Language Arts (LA) Proficiency Test in 3 groups of the KCS grade-nine youth. In 1982-1986, test scores for handicapped youth were not reported in the totals, in 1987 they were included in the totals. On this figure, results for handicapped youth were removed for Target but not for City and Others (see text); gross data only are reported here. Handicapped pupils' scores were removed for (X) and (O) samples elsewhere in the analyses. (⟶ indicates the estimate for city scores with handicapped pupils scores removed)

Table 3 shows that all eight schools increased the percent of grade-nine pupils passing the Proficiency Test for both M and LA when the 1982-84 baseline scores are compared to the 1987 scores. From a different perspective, the Target schools showed a large mean increase of 16.5% (M) and 23.7% (LA) while the Other schools reflected a modest increase of 5.8% and 8.7% respectively. (Note, however, that Target schools had considerably more room for improvement).

Collectively, the average scores for the eight schools reflected a 9.2% (M) and 13.5% (LA) increase. When each school's percent increase or decrease is compared to this benchmark for M or LA, five of the six comparisons for Target schools (83%) exceeded the benchmark but only two of ten (20%) for the Other schools exceeded it.

The sum of the mean percent increase for both M and LA is 22.8% for the City (n=8). When the sum increase for each school is compared to this benchmark, all three Target schools surpassed this benchmark, but only one of the five Other schools surpassed 22.8%. Target schools made greater gains relative to the City than did the Other schools, but Target schools had more room to improve.

Pupils in Other schools, when compared to pupils in Target schools, scored slightly higher in both M and LA from an absolute standpoint. From an educational research perspective, a logical question is "When comparing the pupils from the Target schools and Other schools, are the scores for the two 'samples' similar or different?" Using appropriate statistical techniques to analyze the pupil Proficiency Test data, there were no differences between the percent of pupils passing M and LA in two groups at the end of the third year of the project.

TABLE 3

SUMMARY RESULTS, KCS PROFICIENCY PROJECT: PERCENT OF GRADE-NINE PUPILS (HANDICAPPED PUPIL DATA REMOVED) PASSING THE PROFICIENCY TEST IN 1987 AND BASELINE.

	1987 (HR)		1982-84 Baseline		Difference (All Gains)		Sum Total % Increase
Target	M	LA	M	LA	M (+/-)**	LA (+/-)	
Austin-East	93.1	81.6	60.8	42.8	**32.3** (+)	**38.8** (+)	**71.1**
Fulton	96.9	83.7	88.9	66.6	8.0 (-)	**15.1** (+)	**23.1**
Rule	83.5	74.7	70.2	53.1	**13.3** (+)	**21.6** (+)	**34.9**
X (3 HS)	92.7	81.1	76.2	57.4	**16.5** (+)	**23.7** (+)	**40.2**
Others							
Bearden	98.4	94.2	93.0	89.7	5.3 (-)	4.5 (-)	9.8
Central	96.4	90.3	92.9	82.7	3.5 (-)	7.6 (-)	11.1
Holston	89.9	92.7	95.5	72.4	5.6 (-)	**20.3** (+)	**25.9**
South-Young	91.2	75.5	77.1	64.0	**14.1** (+)	11.5 (-)	2.6
West	83.9	78.3	82.5	76.1	1.4 (-)	2.2 (-)	3.6
X (5 HS)	94.4	87.6	88.6	78.9	5.8 (-)	8.7 (-)	14.5
City							
X (8 HS)	94.0	85.8	84.8	72.3	9.2 (N/A)	13.5 (N/A)	**22.8**
City X	N/C@	N/C@	83.6	71.2	N/C@	N/C@	N/C@

* City average includes more than the pupils in the 8 high schools. @N/C = not computed, but estimated at 2 percent less than 8 HS based on past records.

** Is this percent gain more (+) or less (-) than the gain for all 8 H.S. ?

Detailed Internal Analyses of Samples

Detailed analyses were conducted using the samples (X) and (O) drawn for that purpose. In these samples, the test results for handicapped students have been removed (HR). Table 4 describes the samples, showing the numbers of pupils in the demographic divisions; Sex (M,F); Race (W,NW); SES by Free Lunch or No Free Lunch (FL,NFL).

TABLE 4

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SAMPLE FOR 1986-87 KCS PROFICIENCY PROJECT EVALUATION (HANDICAPPED PUPILS OMITTED)

Schools	N	n	NFL	FL	M	F	W	NW
Project (X)	396	139	66	73	65	74	67	72
Control (O)	424	128	67	61	51	77	100	28
Totals	820	267	133	134	116	151	167	100

Analyses included comparisons of the number (frequency) of pupils in various groups either passing or not passing the (M) or (LA) portions of the test using a Chi-square design. Analyses included comparisons of, for example, Males vs Females in (X) and also M(X) vs M(O). Thus analyses were made within a condition (X) or (O) but between pupil groups (e.g. M, F) and within pupil groups (M) or (F) but between conditions (X or O). There were no significant differences in any of the 24 comparisons. (Table 5).

Tables 6 and 7 show essentially the same analyses as those described above but using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Table 6 shows the results between the (X) and (O) conditions on tests or subject (M or LA) for the pupil groups (M,F; W,NW; FL,NFL). Table 7 shows the results for six pupil groups by subject (M or LA) within the condition (X) or (O). There were no statistically significant results in any analysis.

TABLE 5

THE X^2 RESULTS FOR DIFFERENCES IN FREQUENCIES OF GROUPS OF PUPILS (M/F, W/NW, FL/NFL) PASSING/FAILING THE KCS PROFICIENCY TESTS (1987) FOR M AND LA IN THE X AND O SAMPLES

MATH Groups	Condition	X^2	Sig.	Group/Condition	X^2	Sig.
M/F	X	.05	ns	MX MO	1.21	ns
M/F	O	2.09	ns	FX FO	.57	ns
W/NW	X	.04	ns	WX WO	.05	ns
W/NW	O	1.53	ns	NWX NWO	1.58	ns
FL/NFL	X	.02	ns	FLX FLO	.04	ns
FL/NFL	O	.02	ns	NFLX NFLO	.01	ns
LA						
M/F	X	.11	ns	MX MO	.55	ns
M/F	O	1.47	ns	FX FO	.12	ns
W/NW	X	.47	ns	WX WO	.07	ns
W/NW	O	.05	ns	NWX NWO	.34	ns
FL/NFL	X	.01	ns	FLX FLO	.29	ns
FL/NFL	O	.50	ns	NFLX NFLO	.01	ns

TABLE 6

ANOVA RESULTS: RACE (W/NW); SEX (M/F), SES (FL/NFL) OF MEAN TEST RESULTS FOR M AND LA BETWEEN THE X AND O SAMPLES, KCS 1987 PROFICIENCY TESTS

Subj.	Cond.	Groups	Df	F-Test	Sig.	
M	X,O	M/F	3	1.132	ns	
LA	X,O	M/F	3	.537	ns	
M	X,O	W/NW	3	.839		ns
LA	X,O	W/NW	3	.095		ns
M	X,O	FL/NFL	3	.052	ns	
LA	X,O	FL/NFL	3	.875	ns	

TABLE 7

ANOVA RESULTS: RACE (W/NW), SEX (M/F), SES (FL/NFL) OF MEAN TEST RESULTS FOR M AND LA WITHIN THE X AND O SAMPLES, KCS, 1987 PROFICIENCY TESTS

Subj.	Cond.	Groups	Df	F-Test	Sig.
M	X	(M/F, W/NW, FL/NFL)	5	.690	ns
M	O	(M/F, W/NW, FL/NFL)	5	.417	ns
LA	X	(M/F, W/NW, FL/NFL)	5	.428	ns
LA	O	(M/F, W/NW, FL/NFL)	5	.568	ns

Therefore, the proficiency project students (schools) met the effective schools conditions. There are no significant differences between the percent of pupils passing M and LA in Target and Other schools either in: (1) group mean scores, or (2) frequency of pupils passing the test.

RESULTS: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Teachers responded to a survey of their needs and concerns about the Proficiency Project. The survey was administered in the Fall, 1984 and Spring, 1985 as a pilot test with a small sample of teachers. The revised instrument was given in the Fall, 1985; Spring, 1986 and again in the Spring, 1987.

The questionnaire covered a series of general topics. (Responses are shown in Appendix B for each item). Generally, there were few differences between the beginning-of-the-year (pre) and the end-of-the-year (post) and the end-of-project (1987) responses. Question 4 asks if teachers patterned their teacher-made tests after standardized test formats. There was some shift in (pre/post) response, with a larger percent of teachers answering more positively to the question (post than pre). Item 5 asked whether or not teachers used pre-test scores to help plan instruction and manage the classroom. In 1987 a strong majority of teachers responded positively (approximately 90%). This was considerably more positive than first-year responses, and may reflect increasing teacher concern for teaching about the test and to the test objectives. In item 11 teachers noted whether or not the adopted text and mathematics program were adequate for teaching the math skills tested by the state proficiency tests. Although there is a generally positive nature to these responses, teachers are not enthusiastic about the matchup between the adopted text/program and the skills being tested.

One set of questions asked teachers to comment on their lines of communication with other elements of the school system, with students and with the

community. There are generally positive responses to the communications question except in the area of "community and community organizations" where 28% of the responses (pre) are quite positive and only 13% of the (post) responses and 16% of 1987 responses are positive. Teachers believe that they do not have open lines of communication with the "community and community organizations", and that this communication did not improve during the year or throughout the project. Communication with the community is an important element of the "effective schools" program nationwide. This may be an area of concern for future project efforts.

Regular teachers indicate that the proficiency teacher is helpful to them, and rank in first place the proficiency teacher's ability to provide useful materials. Providing helpful suggestions and information to teachers in the classroom setting is the proficiency teacher's second-ranked, most-helpful behavior.

An open-ended question asked teachers, "I would like to make the following comments and suggestions". The most frequent comments were positive responses regarding proficiency teachers and special proficiency project activities. Teachers also could complete the statement, "My greatest concern in teaching is...". The responses ranked first both pre and post dealt with motivation of students and concern for student, parent, and teacher interactions. The major concern ranked second (pre) dealt with lack of adequate materials and supplies, but at the post-test a general concern for adequacy of teaching (a combination of several categories) was the second-ranked concern. Figure 2 provides some samples of actual respondent comments in the top-ranked categories; a categorization of responses appears in the appropriate place of Appendix B. Figure 2 includes only 1985 (pre) to 1986 (post) samples.

RE: I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS . . .

#2 Statement: Pleased with proficiency teacher and/or proficiency activities.

Pre-Questionnaire Responses

- "The 'Hat's Off' program proves very encouraging to the students in improving their work and behavior."
- "I appreciate the efforts of the proficiency teacher - please keep them!"
- "[The proficiency teacher] has a positive PR, keeps us posted on information, and provides useful materials."

Post-Questionnaire Responses

- "Our proficiency teacher has been an asset to our school through motivation and providing materials."
- "Our proficiency teacher has played a major part in boosting the moral of the school through positive reinforcement."
- "Continue the program--the work packets were great this year."

#3 Statement: Special requests of proficiency teacher for needed service.

Pre-Questionnaire Responses

- "Lower level books for resource covering the same skills tested on the Basic Skills Test."
- "I would like the pre-test for my students also."

#5 Statement: Need for services other than those provided.

Post-Questionnaire Responses

- "We need a language arts supervisor . . .There are 2 P.E. supervisors."
- "Improved tutor scheduling for more learner-participation in the program."

RE: MY GREATEST CONCERN IN TEACHING IS . . .

#1 Statement: Motivation of students: students/parents/teachers

Pre-Questionnaire Responses

- "Getting the students to really get involved and parental involvement and motivation. I believe that a big part of our parents do not realize the importance of their part."
- "Motivation - mine and the students."
- "That the child's physical, emotional, social, and academic growth remain as my top priority and not just the test scores."

Figure 2. Sample responses/quotations from the pre-and post-teacher questionnaire on project needs and concerns.

Post-Questionnaire Responses

- "Lack of parental involvement with the students. Students have little motivation."
- "Reinforcement coming from home."
- "New ways to motivate students to learn."
- "Motivating students to study objectives and master content."

#4 Statement: Combination of 1-3 (Concern for teaching adequacy).

Post-Questionnaire Responses

- "Too much emphasis on basic skills objectives."
- "Covering the reading comprehension skills - I feel inadequate in teaching reading skills."
- "Pressure for students to pass proficiency test. No feedback to teachers as to performance of job. No group discussion of problems areas and better ways to teach skills."

#7 Statement: Lack of adequate materials.

Pre-Questionnaire Responses

- "Lack of textbooks and overloaded classes."

RE: LIST ACTIVITIES YOU PROVIDED THIS YEAR, BUT NOT LAST YEAR . . .

#1 Statement: Implemented special instructional programs/techniques.

Post-Questionnaire Responses

- "Use of pre-test twice - Fall, after Christmas before test time."
- "More feedback of objective testing to parents."
- "Increased parent communication concerning test."
- "I set up tutoring sessions and more individual time for seniors who had not passed."
- "Individualized Basic Skills Learning Center which lets students work on skills they failed to master on the pre-test."
- "Writing in journals consistently, incorporating more writing activities in my curriculum, and letting students work together in correcting their papers."
- "More reviews, more oral-learner feedback, and more monitoring."
- "Teacher-made puzzles, tests, and computer tests."

Figure 2. Cont.

Generally, pre and post responses were quite similar and quite postive. Teacher concerns for student motivation, for communication in the community, for community involvement and for the need for additional teaching materials and supplies come through strongly in responses to this questionnaire. One surprising response was the high percent of teachers who indicated that they have not recently completed additional professional growth activities. By far the most prevalent professional growth activity was teacher involvement in the Tennessee Instruction Model (TIM), but the fact that over 40 percent (pre) and 30 percent (post) of the teachers indicated no professional growth activities, and an extremely high number of the teachers (21 of 72 pre; 19 of 60 post) did not respond to this item suggests that there probably should be more serious attention to educator inservice and continuing professional growth issues. The TESA (Teacher Expectation, Student Achievement) model had not been implemented in the Proficiency Project in the early stages. TESA is important to improve school climate, an effective schools correlate. It was used in year three, but this late implementation may have been "too little too late" for measurable differences.

Responses to the questionnaire (Appendix B) are shown as percentages in most cases. A review of those responses shows the pre/post similarities and highlights key concerns as expressed in this narrative. The number of non-respondents to each item is also shown. The general agreement between pre/post responses appears in Appendix B as (ns) on those items that were tested using either Chi-square for frequency or a test for differences in mean "scores" of groups using the assigned values of responses (1-5) as "scores".

CONCLUSION

Possibly, there are three explanations for why the City scores for 1987 are greater than the 1982-84 average: (1) the Other schools' scores pulled up the City scores, (2) the Target schools' scores pushed up the City scores, and (3) some judicious combination of the prior two explanations. Debating whether a glass of water is half-full or half-empty may be just as inappropiate as trying to determine whether the City scores were pushed or pulled up.

Since both samples of students made dramatic score improvements, and the data analyses indicate that the pupils' Proficiency Test scores from the Target and Other schools are not significantly different, then these two observations would logically prompt further discussions such as:

1. What outcomes might be expected for 3, 5, or 10 years after the completion of this project (i.e., for City, Target, and Other)?

2. What successful instructional, supervisory, and administrative techniques were used to improve the pupils' Proficiency Test scores, and which educational techniques (i.e., instructional, supervisory, and administrative) were the most and least effective in increasing the pupils' Proficiency Test scores?

3. Where will future support (i.e., State Department of Education, Knox County, community, and local educators) for tomorrow's improvement in the Proficiency Test scores come from? How will it be used?

4. How will the start of improving Proficiency Test scores energized in this project be maintained so that Target schools continue to gain?

Acceptable levels of achievement in basic skills is a realistic expectation. This project clearly indicates that comparable Proficiency Test scores can and should be a realistic educational objective among various groups of pupils. Knoxville pupils' Proficiency Test results improved because: (1) the low percentage of pupils passing the Proficiency Test was identified and recognized, (2) the greater educational community used its resources and energies to remediate this educational deficiency, and (3) the teachers and pupils all worked at the improvement in the schools while the parents and community supported the emphasis.

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Note

Sections of this paper, especially baseline tables and figures, appeared in prior project reports.

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APPENDIX A

Tables A-1 to A-7

This information identifies some 1984-1985 analyses that led to the decision to employ a post-test only design in years 2 and 3 of the evaluation. These tables are from the 1984-85 evaluation reports and related documents.

Tables A-1 to A-4 are t-test analyses comparing pretest and posttest scores of selected groupings of respondents. In general, pretest analyses show that the groups were different at the beginning of the project, and that the "target" groups had made substantial gains by the posttest, even to the point of removing the statistically significant differences evident in pretest analysis. Table A-1 shows results for race/sex groupings of total sample; A-2 for (X) vs. (O) groupings; A-3 for (X) on pre/post and A-4 for (O) on pre/post.

The evaluators identified, from analyses reported in Tables A-1 to A-4, those groups on the pretests that scored furthest apart. Highest were white (O) and female (O); lowest were nonwhite (X) and male (X). Tables A-5 and A-6 show that the differences between these groups were extreme (statistically significant) at pretest, but at the posttest there were no statistically significant differences.

Table A-7 shows, using an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), that the low-scoring groups (essentially the X, or those in the project) gained significantly more than the high-scoring (O) groups during the project. Based on these results, the evaluators determined that the project was "on target" and that, if random samples were used, a post-test only design would be appropriate in the second and third years of the evaluation.

Table A-1

t - Tests by Sex and Race for Total Sample on Pretest and Posttest Scores
Knoxville City Proficiency Test Project:1984-85

				Math					
		Pre(1)				Post(2)			
Group	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Prob.	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	Prob.
White	216	53.71	15.24	3.21	.002	69.37	12.91	-.636	.512
Non-White	129	48.33	14.80			70.26	11.22		
				Lang. Arts					
		Pre(3)				Post(4)			
White	216	68.96	19.55	2.63	.009	94.67	21.96	.067	.947
Non-White	129	63.27	19.31			94.82	18.79		
				Math					
		Pre(5)				Post(6)			
Male	176	50.86	16.41	-1.04	.298	69.57	13.12	-.205	.837
Female	169	52.57	14.01			69.84	11.40		
				Lang Arts					
		Pre(7)				Post(8)			
Male	176	63.43	21.08	-3.35	.001	91.81	22.55	-2.69	.008
Female	169	70.38	17.35			97.76	16.40		

For Var. are equal:	1) F= 1.06 p < .73	2) F= 1.32 p ≤ .08
Odd Number = pre	3) F= 1.03 p ≤ .88	4) F= 1.37 p ≤ .053
Even Number = post	5) F= 1.37 p ≤ .04	6) F= 1.32 p ≤ .07
	7) F= 1.48 p ≤ .01	8) F= 1.50 p ≤ .01

Table A-2

t - Tests by Race and Sex for Experimental Vs. Control Groups on Pretest and Posttest Scores, KCS, 1984-85

					Math					
			Pre(1,3)					Post(2,4)		
Group		n	x	SD	t	Prob.	x	SD	t	Prob.
Non-white	O	41	52.20	17.19	1.865	.07	70.32	11.10	.037	.97
	X	88	46.53	13.27			70.24	11.34		
White	O	134	54.99	14.66	1.574	.117	69.12	12.07	-.358	.72
	X	82	51.63	16.02			69.77	14.23		
					Lang. Arts					
			Pre(5,7)					Post(6,8)		
Non-white	O	41	67.32	22.27	1.635	.10	94.24	21.84	-.238	.81
	X	88	61.39	17.58			95.09	17.32		
White	O	134	69.15	19.88	.179	.858	93.92	23.11	-.627	.53
	X	82	68.66	19.12			95.87	20.01		
					Math					
			Pre(9,11)					Post(10,12)		
Male	O	93	52.77	16.51	1.643	.10	69.45	11.77	-.123	.90
	X	83	48.72	16.12			69.70	14.57		
Female	O	82	56.10	13.64	3.265	.001	69.34	11.97	-.55	.58
	X	87	49.25	13.60			70.31	10.89		
					Lang. Arts					
			Pre(13,15)					Post(14,16)		
Male	O	93	65.19	21.78	1.179	.24	91.52	24.36	-.184	.85
	X	83	61.45	20.21			92.14	20.44		
Female	O	82	70.72	18.05	1.708	.09	96.83	20.58	-.631	.53
	X	87	68.18	16.47			98.63	16.15		

For Var. are equal:	1) F = 1.68 p < .05	2) F = 1.05 p < .90
Odd numbers = pre	3) F = 1.19 p < .36	4) F = 1.39 p < .09
Even numbers = post	5) F = 1.60 p < .07	6) F = 1.59 p < .07
	7) F = 1.08 p < .71	8) F = 1.33 p < .16
	9) F = 1.05 p < .82	10) F = 1.33 p < .05
	11) F = 1.01 p < .97	12) F = 1.21 p < .39
	13) F = 1.16 p < .49	14) F = 1.42 p < .10
	15) F = 1.20 p < .40	16) F = 1.62 p < .03

Table A-3
t-Tests by Race and Sex for Experimental Group (n=170) on
Pretest and Posttest Scores, KCS, 1984-85

				Math					
			Pre(1)					Post(2)	
Group	n	x	SD	t	Prob.	x	SD	t	Prob.
White	82	51.63	16.02	2.562	.02	69.77	14.23	-.237	.81
Non-white	88	46.53	13.27			70.24	11.34		
				Lang. Arts					
			Pre(3)					Post(4)	
White	82	68.66	19.12	2.583	.01	95.87	20.01	-.271	.79
Non-white	88	61.39	17.58			95.09	17.32		
				Math					
			Pre(5)					Post(6)	
Male	83	48.72	16.12	-.232	.82	69.70	14.57	-.310	.76
Female	87	49.25	13.60			70.31	10.89		
				Lang. Arts					
			Pre(7)					Post(8)	
Male	83	61.45	20.21	-2.388	.02	92.14	20.46	-2.288	.02
Female	87	68.18	16.47			98.63	16.15		

For H_o Var. are equal. 1) $F = 1.46$ $p \leq .09$ 2) $F = 1.57$ $p \leq .04$
Odd numbers = pre 3) $F = 1.18$ $p \leq .44$ 4) $F = 1.33$ $p \leq .19$
Even numbers = post 5) $F = 1.40$ $p \leq .12$ 6) $F = 1.79$ $p \leq .01$
7) $F = 1.51$ $p \leq .06$ 8) $F = 1.60$ $P \leq .03$

Table A-4
t-Tests by Race and Sex for Control Group (n=175) on
Pretest and Posttest Scores, KCS, 1984-85

				Math					
			Pre(1)					Post(2)	
Group	n	x	SD	t	Prob.	x	SD	t	Prob.
White	134	54.99	14.66	1.023	.31	69.12	12.07	-.566	.572
Non-white	41	52.20	17.19			70.32	11.10		
				Lang. Arts					
			Pre(3)					Post(4)	
White	134	69.15	19.88	.502	.62	93.93	23.11	-.076	.94
Non-white	41	67.32	22.27			94.24	21.84		
				Math					
			Pre(5)					Post(6)	
Male	93	52.77	16.31	-1.440	.15	69.45	11.77	.061	.95
Female	82	56.10	13.64			69.34	11.97		
				Lang. Arts					
			Pre(7)					Post(8)	
Male	93	65.19	21.73	-2.409	.01	91.52	24.36	-1.547	.12
Female	82	72.72	18.05			96.83	20.58		

For H_o Var. are equal: 1) $F = 1.28$ $p \leq .18$ 2) $F = 1.18$ $p \leq .55$
Odd numbers = pre 3) $F = 1.26$ $p \leq .34$ 4) $F = 1.12$ $p \leq .69$
Even numbers = post 5) $F = 1.46$ $p \leq .08$ 6) $F = 1.03$ $p \leq .87$
7) $F = 1.46$ $p \leq .08$ 8) $F = 1.40$ $p \leq .12$

Table A-5

Pretest Analyses (M, LA) Between Highest/Lowest Scoring Groups (X, O) in KCS Proficiency Test Project (1984-85)

Groups	n	MATH(M) $\bar{x}$	SD	t/sig.	LANGUAGE ARTS (LA) $\bar{x}$	SD	t/sig.
Nonwhite (x)	88	46.53	13.27	4.36	61.39	17.58	2.98
White (o)	134	54.99	14.66	.001	69.15	19.88	.003
DIFF.		8.46			7.76		
Male (x)	83	48.72	16.12	3.17	61.47	20.21	3.78
Female (o)	82	56.10	13.64	.002	72.72	18.05	.001
DIFF.		7.38			11.28		

Table A-6

Posttest Analysis (M, LA) Between Groups (X, O) That Scored Furthest Apart on Pretests in KCS Proficiency Test Project (1984-85)

Groups	n	MATH (M) $\bar{x}$	SD	t/sig.	LANGUAGE ARTS (LA) $\bar{x}$	SD	t/sig.
Nonwhite (x)	88	70.24	11.34	-.69	95.09	17.32	-.43
White (o)	134	69.12	12.07	.49	93.93	23.11	.670
DIFF.		1.12			1.16		
Male (x)	83	69.70	14.57	-.17	92.14	20.46	1.47
Female (o)	82	69.34	11.97	.86	96.83	20.58	.14
DIFF.		.36			4.69		

Table A-7

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Pre-to-Post for Gains (M, LA) of Groups Scoring Highest (White, O; Fem., O) and Lowest (Male, X; Non-white, X) on Pretests in KCS Proficiency Test Project (1984-85)

	MATH (M) Hom. of Var. F	SIG	ANCOVA F	SIG	LANGUAGE ARTS (LA) Hom. of Var. F	SIG	ANCOVA F	SIG
N.White/White Pre - Post	1.53 (ok)	.22	14.35	.0001	1.95 (ok)	.19	17.23	.0001
Male/Female Pre - Post	.13 (ok)	.72	11.91	.0001	.25 (ok)	.62	16.41	.0001

APPENDIX B

PROFICIENCY REMEDIATION PROJECT: L.A./MATH TEACHER NEEDS/CONCERNS
(Summary of Pre/Post Responses of Teachers, 1985-86, 1987)

Data, except as stated, are reported as percents, which may not total 100% due to rounding. The no response (N/R) category is reported as a number (n), as is the total number of respondents. *=Pre/post analysis of differences in means (1987). Most tests were (ns). 1987 Post test percents are also shown. 1987 Pre (n=61); Post (n=45).

I. TEST OBJECTIVES/SKILL BUILDING:

	NOT APPLICABLE N/A	NOT AT ALL 1	NOT MUCH 2	SOME 3	MUCH 4	VERY MUCH 5	NO RESP (n)	TOT (n)
1. I am familiar with my subject area's test objectives. (*ns)								
Pre	4	0	3	4	23	66	1	72
Post	5	0	0	2	12	81	1	60
Post '87	2	0	0	4	9	84	0	45
2. I am pleased with the manner in which I am informed of the test objectives for my subject area. (*ns)								
Pre	6	3	6	17	30	39	1	72
Post	4	2	5	4	35	51	3	60
Post '87	4	0	9	2	27	58	0	45
3. I plan lessons according to the test objectives. (*ns)								
Pre	9	0	3	9	34	46	2	72
Post	4	0	0	5	26	65	3	60
Post '87	9	0	0	2	33	56	0	45
4. I pattern my teacher-made tests after the standardized format. (*ns)								
Pre	11	4	16	39	17	13	1	72
Post	4	2	12	39	25	19	3	60
Post '87	9	2	2	47	24	16	0	45
5. I use the Pretest scores in my classroom planning and management: for overall class instruction. (*ns)								
Pre	11	4	0	21	30	33	2	72
Post	2	2	7	25	26	39	3	60
Post '87	9	0	2	18	33	38	0	45
for small group instruction (*ns)								
Pre	12	4	4	35	28	16	4	72
Post	4	5	11	26	32	23	3	0
Post '87	12	0	5	34	24	24	4	41

for individual instruction (*ns)

Pre	15	3	3	31	22	27	4	72
Post	2	4	9	26	22	37	6	60
Post '87	10	0	3	43	18	28	5	40

6. I have completed Professional Growth activities for Teacher Training (*ns).

Pre	57 Yes	43 No	21 NR(n)	72 TOT(n)
Post	68 Yes	32 No	19 NR(n)	60 TOT(n)
Post '87	76 Yes	24 No	12 NR(n)	45 TOT(n)

List	Pre (n)	3	20	0	49	72
	Post (n)	6	11	6	37	60
	Post '87 (n)	2	18	1	24	45
		GRAD TNG	TIM	OTHER	NR	TOT

7. I teach L... and Reading as separate subjects. (Middle School only)

Pre (n)	20 Yes	8 No	34 N/A	10 NR	72 TOT
Post (n)	19 Yes	10 No	29 N/A	2 NR	60 TOT
Post '87 (n)	12 Yes	5 No	28 N/A	0 NR	45 TOT

8. I adhere to the adopted reading skills development program (Harcourt, Brace, and Jovannovich). (Middle School only) (*ns)

Pre (n)	34	0	1	5	4	6	22	72
Post (n)	20	1	0	2	7	3	27	60
Post '87	4	0	0	3	4	4	28	45

9. The HBJ Reading Program is adequate for teaching the skills to be tested. (Middle School only) (*ns)

Pre (n)	34	0	3	6	5	4	20	72
Post (n)	16	1	3	5	5	1	29	60
Post '87	4	0	4	1	5	2	29	45

10. I adhere to the adopted Math skills program test: (*ns)

Pre	57	2	2	5	11	23	28	72
Post	63	0	3	11	13	11	22	60
Post '87	39	4	4	4	17	31	22	45

11. The adopted text (program) is adequate for teaching the skills to be tested. (*ns)

Pre	32	2	11	9	28	17	19	72
Post	40	9	2	16	27	7	15	60
Post '87	15	3	6	27	27	21	12	45

II. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RELATIONS:

		N/A	1	2	3	4	5	NR	TOT
1. I have an open line of communication with:**									
a. Principal (*ns) (or assistant)	Pre	0	0	2	7	29	62	4	72
	Post	2	0	0	13	32	53	0	60
	87 Post	2	0	0	11	27	59	1	44
b. Supervisor (*ns)	Pre	9	6	5	18	18	44	6	72
	Post	4	4	9	17	28	38	0	60
	87 Post	10	2	2	24	27	34	4	45
c. Basic Skills Teacher(s) (*ns)	Pre	0	0	0	19	28	53	4	72
	Post	3	0	2	12	32	51	1	60
	87 Post	7	0	2	11	16	64	1	45
d. Colleagues (*ns)	Pre	0	0	0	10	19	71	5	72
	Post	0	0	3	13	28	55	0	60
	87 Post	0	0	2	9	33	56	2	45
e. Parents (*ns)	Pre	0	2	16	37	16	28	5	72
	Post	0	3	19	47	19	12	2	60
	87 Post	0	7	14	43	21	16	1	45
f. Students (*ns)	Pre	0	0	0	9	27	65	4	72
	Post	0	0	0	5	35	60	0	60
	87 Post	0	0	0	7	30	64	1	45
g. Community and Community Orgs. (*ns)	Pre	3	11	17	41	14	14	8	72
	Post	4	18	14	53	4	9	3	60
	87 Post	2	16	14	51	9	7	2	45

	NOT APPLICABLE N/A	NOT AT ALL 1	NOT MUCH 2	SOME 3	MUCH 4	VERY MUCH 5	NO RESP (n)	TOT (n)
2. Generally my classes complete assigned homework. *.01 (favor pre.) (2.70 df 101).								
Pre	6	3	9	25	46	12	4	72
Post	7	5	14	42	32	0	1	60
Post 87	7	5	16	36	34	2	1	45
3. Problems with classroom discipline interfere with my teaching effectiveness. *ns								
Pre	7	21	40	25	6	4	4	72
Post	9	31	26	21	9	5	2	60
Post 87	5	7	35	35	12	7	2	45

** Figure shows the similarity of the 1987 pre/post analyses of these items. All items (pre/post) were ns.

Post test only

4. I used the services of the proficiency teaching to foster my basic skills/ proficiency program.

1986	2	2	7	35	38	16	5	60
1987	12	0	7	22	39	20	4	45

5. The proficiency Teacher could best help me by providing (check the appropriate space(s):

	Pre		Post		Post '87	
	n	Rk	n	Rk	n	Rk
Motivation/Incentive	27	3	42	4.5	30	4.5
Line of communication (Positive PR)	23	4.5	51	3	34	2
Helpful suggestions/Information	39	2	52	2	36	1
Useful Materials	55	1	53	1	32	3
Consistent follow-up	23	4.5	42	4.5	30	4.5
Other - please list	3	6	7	6	2	6

6. I would like to make the following comments/suggestions:

	Pre		Post		1987
	n	Rk	n	Rk	Rk
1. Too much too soon (ask too much of teachers/students)	2	3	1	5	3
2. Pleased with Prof Tch and/or special Prof activities	10	1	12	1	3
3. Special requests of Prof. Tch. for needed service	9	2	4	3.5	1
4. Need for more overall support of Basic Skills program activities	0	0	4	3.5	5
5. Need for services other than those provided	0	0	8	2	3
NR	51	0	31	0	

7. My greatest concern in teaching is:

	Pre		Post		1987
	n	Rk	n	Rk	Rk
1. Motivation of Students: Students/Parents/Teachers	11	1	13	1	1
2. All learning is centered on Basic Skills	4	6	3	6	2.5
3. Having enough time to develop materials/tch objectives	5	3.5	3	6	4.5
4. Combination of 1-3 (Concern for teaching adequacy)	1	8	6	2	8.5
5. Student Scheduling/Placement	4	6	1	8.5	7
6. Student comprehension/retention	4	6	4	3.5	2.5
7. Lack of adequate materials	6	2	4	8.5	6
8. Positive classroom mgt. and discipline	5	3.5	1	8.5	4.5
9. Lack of coord. curric. (Other).	0	0	3	6	8.5
NR	32	0	22	0	17

POST TEST ONLY

LIST ACTIVITIES YOU PROVIDED THIS YEAR, BUT NOT LAST YEAR.

	n	Rk	1987 Rk
1. Implemented special instruction programs/techniques	14	1	3.5
2. More comprehensive/active use of Basic Skills Program	4	2	1
3. Special student tutor/assist sessions on problem skills	2	3.5	2
4. More involvement and encouragement of parent participation	2	3.5	5
NR	38	0	29